



Republic of Uganda: Conserve Biodiversity for Sustainable Development (COBS) Support Project

A project of the the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of the Republic of Uganda
Contractor: ARD, Inc.
September 1999–September 2002
\$7 million
USAID Contract No: OUT-LAG-I-800-99-00013-00
Task Order 800 under the Biodiversity and Forestry Services (BIOFOR) IQC

ARD-COBS SUPPORTS DIVERSE ASPECTS OF USAID-Uganda's Strategic Objective (SO2) "Critical Ecosystems Conserved to Sustain Biological Diversity and to enhance Benefits to Society." The project takes a landscape approach to improved conservation and sustainable environmental management. Operations are largely focused in south-west Uganda in protected area and their contiguous administrative districts.

COBS Support Team and Project Implementation

ARD-COBS HAS A SMALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT in Kampala. CARE-Uganda works with ARD as a subcontractor in an integrated project management structure. The project has 9 full-time technical staff members and 10 support staff members, and has fielded more than 25 short- and medium-term consultants, several on multiple missions.

Most project staff and consultants work directly inside central and local government or other organizations. They support capacity-building and more effective operation of those organizations and help them fulfill their environmental conservation mandates. This "support approach," in contrast to projects that work parallel to local structures, leads to institutional and environmental project impacts that will continue long after project personnel are removed.



Protected Areas Management

THE ARD-COBS PROJECT TEAM SUPPORTS THE Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in its development of systems for preparing and implementing General Management Plans for wildlife protected areas. This work continues from USAID's preceding "Action Plan for the Environment" (APE) project, which ARD also implemented in its later phases. During APE, a management plan for Queen Elizabeth Protected Area was prepared. ARD-COBS saw this plan through the approval and production stages.

A capacity-building, participatory, multidisciplinary, team-based approach to planning was introduced to UWA. More cost-effective and user-friendly management plans for Murchison Falls Conservation Area and Lake Mburo National Park were developed following successive "lessons learned" refinements of the planning process.

General Management Plans are useful only if implemented. ARD-COBS helps UWA develop a system of Annual Operations Plans. These Plans, based on the

10-year management plans, fundamentally change UWA's field operations by moving from a day-to-day, line-item, administrative system toward activity-based planning, budgeting, and monitoring of implementation. ARD-COBS supports implementation of several aspects of the Queen Elizabeth General Management Plan, which are priorities for the year 2001–2002, including visitor services, natural resource management, and community conservation.

District Environmental Action Plans

IN CONSULTATION WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT Management Authority (NEMA), ARD-COBS helps four districts in southwestern Uganda develop these plans: Bushenyi, Rukungiri, Kanungu and Kisoro. These districts are critical to effective landscape conservation because of their high population density, land-use pressures, and their proximity to Queen Elizabeth Protected Area and the two "mountain gorilla" national parks of Bwindi and M'gahinga. The ARD-COBS team works closely with all levels of local government in a participatory, bottom-up planning process involving more than 300 parishes and over 60 subcounties in the target districts. More than 20,000 citizens took part in this planning process, which required extensive mobilization and capacity-building efforts.

At the subcounty and district levels, the project introduced an innovative "vision-based" planning approach that leads to strong motivation for implementation using available resources. ARD-COBS helps districts locate partners and resources for implementing District Environment Action Plan (DEAP) activities needing additional inputs, and is directly involved in several implementation activities. As part of this process, ARD-COBS supports an environmental conservation public information and education campaign in the four districts. An additional outcome is the strong relationship developed between the four districts, which see themselves as part of a broader landscape that includes the Protected Areas.

Capacity-Building in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

UGANDA HAS A GOOD REGULATORY SYSTEM FOR EIA, BUT capacity for effective implementation is limited. ARD-COBS focuses on capacity-building in the target DEAP districts in collaboration with NEMA. District technical and administrative staff receive an intensive eight-day course in all aspects of EIA, enabling them to fulfill local government responsibilities for EIA in the context of broader aspects of environmental management. The public role in the EIA process is included in the district information and education activity described above.



A comprehensive EIA manual, prepared in consultation with NEMA, serves as a desk reference for all relevant local and central government officers. ARD-COBS also helps NEMA develop a certification system for EIA practitioners aimed at ensuring a higher level of technical and operational competence.

Program Support

ARD-COBS SUPPORTS THE USAID MISSION IN OTHER tasks relevant to SO2. A major activity is assistance in the evolution of the Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda (ECOTRUST). Project activities include development of internal organizational policies and practices, board of trustees roles and responsibilities, strategic and business planning, and induction of the new Executive Director. Through a Cooperative Agreement with USAID, ECOTRUST provides grants for implementation of DEAPs and protected areas management plans in the COBS focal region, thereby consolidating SO2 activities.

The project has also provided consultants working on environmental aspects of local government funding, a market study of shea nut products in northern Uganda, and environmental compliance of the Mission's new Integrated Strategic Plan.

Contact Information

ARD-COBS
Ian Deshmukh, Chief of Party
PO Box 28997
Kampala
Tel: 256-41-344900/1; Fax 344902
E-mail: ian@ardcoobs.bushnet.net

USAID-Uganda—CTO Greg Booth
Tel: 265-41-258-983
E-mail: gbooth@usaid.gov

ARD, Inc. Senior Technical Advisor
Steve Dennison
Tel: 802-658-3890
Fax: 803-658-4247
E-mail: sdennison@ardinc.com